

REPORT OF THE NEW JERSEY SYNOD JUSTICE AND PEACE MISSION TEAMS

2019 NJ Synod Assembly

Quoting from St. Paul's words to the Philippians, "I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ." (Phil 1:3-6)

The good work of the gospel that Paul speaks of continues through the generations and is spreading through NJ Synod because of the faithful service of so many. This report, in particular lifts up the ministry of the Justice and Peace Mission Teams.

The Hunger Task Team was a key supporter in the Bishop's Challenge; a widely successful campaign to raise awareness and funds for ELCA World Hunger. The Hunger Task Teams serves as a resource to congregations who wish to understand best practices for food justice in their community; this includes management practices of food pantries, community gardening challenges and solutions, and summer feeding programs recommendations, to name only a few. If your congregation would like assistance with food justice ministries please contact Rev. Christine Reagan, chair of the team.

The Ministry with LGBT persons serves as a task team focusing on being a resource for congregations who are discerning their call to be welcoming communities; this includes same gender weddings, ministry with youth who are questioning, and support of the transgendered community. If your congregation would like support with LGBT justice ministries please contact the Synod office.

The Immigration Task Team is going through a time of transition. New leadership will be heading the team in the fall to focus on joining the AMPARRO program of the ELCA, supporting legislation to provide universal representation for persons held in detention, and providing resources for congregations who are discerning how they can be openhearted communities for immigrants. If your congregation would like support with immigrant justice ministries please contact the synod office.

Care of Creation Task Team is working with NJ Renew, Green Faith and other advocacy organization to support congregation's need to care for God's creation. This task team provides resources for congregations on greening their property, reducing carbon emissions, and supporting educational and outreach efforts in local communities. If your congregation would like support with environmental justice ministries please contact the synod office and you will be connected to Lynn Perry, Chair of the team.

MISSION ADVOCACY TABLE REPORT

2019 NJ Synod Assembly

The Mission Advocacy Table (MAT) is responsible for beginning, nurturing and redeveloping congregations that see and understand themselves as outreach centers for God's mission. We also accompany and advocate for all congregations on the territory of the NJ Synod as they participate in God's mission for the sake of the world.

Although our mission territory and the congregations serving within it is ever-changing, our God is faithful and continues to do new things in equipping the saints of the New Jersey Synod for ministry in these places. We are thankful for this commitment to grow, learn and serve in new ways. Here are some:

New Mission Starts

We continue to discern how best to accompany and advocate for the new starts in our synod, increase awareness of mission as a way of life, and strengthen missional behaviors in these worship communities. We are blessed with these Mission Developers: *Pastor Ramon Collazo - Santa Isabel & and Santa Isabel's ministry to immigrants in detention at Elizabeth Detention Center, Elizabeth; Eunyoung Kim - Morning Star Fellowship, Ridgefield; and Pastor Jacqueline Belzer - Misión Pan de Vida, Passaic.*

Cultivating Congregational Vitality – Holy Innovation Project

A) Equipping for Vitality (E4V)

In order to develop and support a network of congregations who are learning to adapt to the changing time and the places in which we do ministry, we have begun these cohort of congregational teams. The congregations are all assigned trained coaches to work with them and include: *Prince of Peace-Old Tappan, Zions-Ridgefield & Garfield + Morning Star, Holy Trinity-Nutley, Good Shepherd-Glen Rock, and Christ-Woodcliff Lake.*

B) Mission Connectors

Some of our congregations in the southern portion of Hudson County are working towards creating a 20/20 vision plan about possibilities for ministry collaboration.

C) Intentional Redevelopment

We are thankful to God for calling *Pastor Jose Escalera* as redeveloper of *Epiphany Lutheran Church, Pleasantville*. He started on Jan 1st, 2019. What a wonderful day to witness a new beginning!

Pastors and lay leaders in *Christus Evangelical Lutheran Church in Camden* and *Saint Bartholomew Lutheran Church, Trenton* continue the engagement in an intentional renewal process through which they are forging new paths for mission.

D) Cultivating Missional Capacity for Sustainability (CMC)

We are accompanying these congregational teams in a multi-year training process during which time they are developing a vision and plan for growing their capacity for mission by focusing on discipleship, stewardship, community relationships and financial development. These include: *St. Thomas, Brick; Holy Cross, Toms River; Holy Trinity, Manasquan; Holy Trinity, Red Bank; Reformation, Long Branch; King of Kings, Middletown.*

E) God's Exceptional Ministries (GEMs)

God's mission and the work of the Holy Spirit are at the heart of these strategic locations in our synod. We partner with them as they minister to people facing aspects of poverty related to food, housing, education, income, employment, healthcare, and immigration. They are: *Bridge of Peace Community Church – Camden, NJ and St. Stephan's Grace Community – Newark, NJ*

F) Leadership for Faithful Innovation – Synod Vitality Strategy

Through a partnership with Luther Seminary and the Lily Foundation, we are one in 6 synods invited to participate in this project which brings together three learning communities: the synod, the pastors, the congregations to reflect on current best ministry and mission practices and ways to strengthen congregational vitality. Participants include: *Pastor Christa M. Compton - Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, Chatham; Pastor Mona Fitch-Elliott - St. John's Lutheran Church, Jersey City; Pastor Jessica D. Lambert - St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Jersey City; Pastor Jane McCreedy - Faith Lutheran Church, New Providence; Pastor Chelsea Miller - Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Somerville; and Pastor Serena Rice - Abiding Peace Lutheran Church, Budd Lake.*

Giving Thanks...

We are grateful to God for the Rev. Maristela Freiberg, our Director for Evangelical Mission (DEM), who brings both joy and passion to our mission work in the New Jersey Synod. She participates in a wide variety of synodical, regional and church-wide events and activities. She recruits and trains congregational leaders and coaches; is a community organizing trainer; guides our synod's Congregational Vitality Project and accompanies congregations in transition.

Many thanks to those who served as part of the Mission Advocacy Table this year: Pastors Judy Anderson, Chris Bruesehoff, Maristela Freiberg, Gladys G. Moore, and Jessica Lambert, and to Bill Emerson, Emily Jones, Susan Merrill, Jason Reed and Willie Richardson. And a special thank you to Dawn Roberts.

Respectfully submitted,
Pastor Gladys G. Moore
St. John's Lutheran Church, Summit

REPORT OF THE YOUTH MINISTRY MISSION TEAM

2019 NJ Synod Assembly

Members: Jason Reed, Debra Porowski, Annemarie Cook, Matt Porowski, Victoria Thomas, Carlos Cuevas, Carla Ferrera, Anthony Briggs, Kathryn Shaefer, Michele Brosman, Jessica Clarke, Nicole Kranz, Hannah Wantula, Christian Wantula, Will Rivera, Alexandra Mack, Carol Dorn, Shannon Molnar

The 2018-2019 Youth Ministry year in the NJ Synod got off to a great start at the **2018 ELCA Youth Gathering** in Houston, TX. Over 400 youth and their adult leaders from over 60 NJ Synod churches spent about a week in Houston with over 30,000 Lutheran youth and adults from all over the ELCA. While at the Gathering, the youth had opportunities to learn, serve, and worship together and alongside the people of Houston. The entire synod was housed together which allowed the youth and the adults to see each other, share meals, go for a swim, and spend time bonding in the lobby! Highlights of the Gathering for many youth included their experiences on their Service Learning Day when the youth from the ELCA accompanied local organizations to provide service for the people and places in Houston, as well as worshipping in NRG park at night! Synod Day found all the youth together for an afternoon of Bible study, singing with Larry Olson and the Synod Band, and worshipping with our Bishop. Following Synod Day, nearly all of the participants headed to one of two seatings at a local restaurant for a Synod Dinner. The restaurant handled our reservations for 200 with grace and good food, and a wonderful time was had by all. The NJ Synod LoveStruck team also traveled to Houston and presented their experience on racism for approximately 1500-2000 youth each day during Interactive Learning. Thank you to Carlos Cuevas and Carla Ferrera for their leadership with Love Struck throughout the year.

Back in NJ, both adults and youth had many opportunities to be together throughout the year. The theme from the Gathering, "This Changes Everything" was the theme for the 2018 **Confirmation Camp** at Cross Roads. It was a great week for all involved in this important ministry of the Synod. Middle Schoolers from across the Synod traveled to Washington DC for the annual **Serve DC** trip where they engaged in hands on service projects throughout the city. A big thank you to Serve DC's Coordinator Janis Provost and Chaplain Sue Jones. The leadership teams for both of these summer events are committed to continuing these opportunities for the younger youth in our Synod.

Each year, the youth in NJ are invited to participate in our annual youth retreats, **Among the Wolves** for grades 6 - 8 and **Winter Youth Assembly** for grades 9 - 12. Both retreats were held at the Fairview Lakes YMCA Camp. Adult and young adult leaders from congregations throughout the Synod provided the leadership and chaplaincy for both events. One of the highlights of both retreats was the tracing, cutting, sanding, and priming of cows for The Bishop's Challenge! These weekends continue to provide opportunities for the youth to get to know each other better, for congregations to strengthen their relationships with each other, and for adults involved in youth ministry to spend time together and share ideas and support. A special thank you to WYA Event Coordinator Nicole Seitz, as well as our chaplains for the events, Seminarian Kelsey Brown (ATW) and Pastor Gary LeCroy and Carla Ferreira (WYA)! I'm also thankful for the opportunity to serve as the ATW Event Coordinator.

Other events throughout the year found both adults and youth involved in ministry in a variety of ways. At **Confirmation Conversations** in November, Jason Reed, Pastor Christa Compton, Pastor Becki Resch and Bishop Tracie Bartholomew led discussions with congregation members and leaders about congregational confirmation ministry. In January, youth and adults celebrated **Los Reyes Magos/Three Kings Day** with a party at Safe Haven for Children, an organization through Lutheran Social Ministries of New York that works with unaccompanied minors who have come to the United States. Later in January, the LoveStruck team traveled with their presentation to the **ELCA Youth Ministry Network Extravaganza**, and interacted with youth ministry leaders through their conversations around racism. LoveStruck will continue their work after being chosen to receive a Youth and Young Adult Ministry Grant in the amount of \$40,000 through the “Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA” for a new LoveStruck leadership project!

In March, the third annual **Faith, Hope, and Love** was held at Abiding Presence church in Ewing. Rostered leaders, lay leaders, congregation members, and young people from five different synods and seven faith communities gathered together for a day of learning and discussion on the topic of welcoming LGBTQ+ youth into the church. Thank you to Jamie Brusehoff for coordinating this important and meaningful day for our Synod. Shortly following this event, the Synod Council voted to approve LGBTQ+ Youth Principals, Policies, and Practices, that affirm our commitment to providing safe and welcoming opportunities for LGBTQ+ youth to participate in youth events.

We would like to extend a special thank you to all of the members of this team for their work in supporting youth ministry events in our Synod throughout the year. The Youth Ministry Mission Team is looking forward to new challenges and new opportunities in the coming year. A subcommittee of the team will begin work this summer to look at the future of the Winter Youth Assembly. We are looking into bringing Youth Mental Health First Aid Training to adults in the Synod who work with youth. The YMMT is committed to continuing the good work of youth ministry in the NJ Synod of the ELCA.

Respectfully submitted,
Debra Porowski
Leader, Youth Ministry Mission Team

REPORT OF THE NEW JERSEY SYNOD BOSNIA INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL TEAM

2019 NJ Synod Assembly

From June 16 to 27, 2018 the New Jersey Synod sent its peace-building, peace-seeking trip to Bosnia-Herzegovina for the 19th year in a row. Dozens of congregations from our synod and around the ELCA actively participated in the trip organized through the Home Team. Our 2018 Travel Team was made up of 16 members from 10 congregations, half of whom were teens or young adults. We held 7 Friendship Camps in schools around the country. We also held our 6th Camp New Hope, a 4-day retreat that gathers and trains young peace-making leaders from across ethnic and religious lines.

Our Bosnia IST Ministry is complex and multi-layered. There is no way to encompass all of it in a single report, but to help share some of the scope and nature of this ministry we offer the below outline as a starting point. We invite you to think of these topics as hypertext: each one is a doorway into one particular facet of this ministry, deeply connect to the whole. The bullet points are just a few entry points into each topic.

Encountering God's Active Presence

A. through Encountering Suffering

- Visiting the Srebrenica Memorial and Sarajevo's Tunnel of Hope.
- Talking with survivors about the war and its unjust aftermath.
- Seeing bullet holes & shell blasts (still!) in buildings.
- Being in schools segregated along ethnic/religious lines.

B. through Experiencing Joy

- Playing with the kids at camp.
- Eating ice cream and sharing coffee at stops along the road.
- Walking around towns, eating and drinking with new friends.

C. through Deepening our lives as Christian Servants

- Throughout this experience noticing God's stirrings.
- Reflecting on racial divisions in their country and ours.
- Exploring the intersection of serving and hospitality and generosity.
- Asking questions of God calling our church to live and act as followers of Jesus.

Serving In Christian Love

A. through our Friendship Camps

- Leading Camp activities.
- Meeting and playing with the children.
- Sharing tokens of love made by the Home Team with the children.
- Using the camp program to further the efforts of reconciliation and peace.

B. through our Camp New Hope

- Living with a group of young people from the different ethnic/religious groups.
- Visiting a church and a mosque with a mixed group of Muslim and Christian children and teachers.
- Witnessing young adult leaders whom we've trained, as they guide the next generation of peace-seekers.

Living In Relationships

A. with Children in a post-war country

- Simply being with them - the ministry of *place-sharing*.
- Singing together, sometimes in their language, sometimes in our
- Being attentive to their fragility and resilience.

- Encountering Jesus in their company.
- B. with the People and Communities in Bosnia-Herzegovina
- Living with host families, sometimes over many years.
 - Finding (and searching for) connections with strangers - despite language, culture and life-experience differences.
 - Meeting and seeking commonality with teachers, school directors, etc.
- C. over Many Years of Accompaniment Ministry
- With Schools, some for as long as 18 years.
 - With NGOs: Srcem Do Mira, Leptir, Joy of Life, Mostar Orphanage, Sarajevo Phoenix, Mothers of Srebrenica.
 - With our companions - our interpreters, coordinators, bus drivers and other hosts.
 - Sensing the deep holy mystery of being together, face-to-face, and exploring forgiveness, peace, justice and reconciliation over such a long period of time.

Leadership Development

- A. of Bosnia-Herzegovina Interpreters
- 50+ young Interpreters, ages 14-24, from across ethnic/religious lines.
 - Some participants growing into Interpreters, then growing into teachers and community leaders.
 - Bringing 18 Interpreters to USA to help lead activities at 3 ELCA Youth Gatherings.
 - “You [the NJ Synod] have completely and forever change all of us who have been your Interpreters”
 - “We would never have traveled to these places and met these people without you”
- B. of Travel Team members
- 100 teens and young adults serving on Travel Teams, 45 having served more than once.
 - Young Team members becoming pastors and youth ministers, changing college majors into teaching and international relations, joining the Peace Corps, traveled to South America with a UN Women’s Organization, joined service/peace trips on 4 continents.

“This ministry has been completely life-changing for me. Not only was it able to confirm the strength of my faith, but it has pointed my life in a new direction... Looking back at everything that has happened to me and everything I have ever done, this has had the greatest impact by far. It’s something that is on my mind everyday. The children of Bosnia have not only opened my eyes to a world forgotten, they have taught me what the human heart and soul is capable of.”

-reflections from a former Travel Team member

Bosnia IST 2018

16 Travel Team members
 10 Congregations sending TT members
 40++ Congregations involved in the Home Team
 7 Friendship Camps
 1,070 Friendship Camp participants
 1 Camp New Hope
 70 Camp New Hope participants - 12 schools

Bosnia IST 2000-2018

201 Travel Team members
 43 NJ Synod Congs. sending TT members
 120++ Congregations involved in the Home Team
 190 Friendship Camps
 28,600+ Friendship Camp participants
 6 Camp New Hope
 300+ Camp New Hope participants - 19 schools
 8 Other ELCA Synods have sent TT members
 3 ELCA Churchwide Staff have served on TT
 7 Other Christian denominations or faith communities have been represented on TT

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE N.J. SYNOD CANDIDACY COMMITTEE

2019 NJ Synod Assembly

The Candidacy Committee could not do its work without the faithful participation of its members, to whom I am grateful: Pastor Carol Petersen, Bishop Tracie Bartholomew, Mr. Anthony Briggs, Ms. Rene Cherson, Pastor Mona Fitch-Elliott, Pastor Maristela Freiberg, Dr. Paul Rajashekar (seminary representative), Pastor Marc Stutzel, and Pastor Matt Thiringer. We are also thankful for the spiritual guidance of our candidacy chaplain, Pastor Dale Selover, and the wise counsel of Pastor Paul Baglyos, who is deployed by the ELCA in support of our work.

This year we bid farewell to two long-time members of the Candidacy Committee. Pastor Jeff Rickards has stepped down after many years of faithful service. We are grateful for the countless ways that he has shared his theological and psychological expertise with us. Our Synod Candidacy Coordinator, Pastor Carol Petersen, has also left that role following her retirement and a move to Delaware. She has been an invaluable resource for our candidates over the years, and I will miss working with her more than I can say. While we pray that retirement is a blessing for her, her departure leaves a void. Please join me in thanking Jeff and Carol for their many contributions.

I hope you will also join me in welcoming our new Candidacy Coordinator, Pastor Becky Resch. She is learning the role with immense speed and clarity, and I look forward to collaborating with her as we move forward.

The Candidacy Committee has met three times throughout the year – twice at the synod office and once at Cross Roads in conjunction with our annual retreat. Attached to this report you will see a list of candidates who are now in the process. Additional endorsement interviews were held at the seminary in October, and throughout the year committee members have met with current and potential candidates.

Our 2019 retreat with candidates and committee members was held on January 24-25. Our theme this year was “(Re)Learning How to Ride a Bike.” We considered what it means to lead a church that is moving into a future we cannot yet envision. What might we need to unlearn? To what do we need to hold fast? We enacted some of the practices that remain central – dwelling in God’s word and sharing Holy Communion together. And we also practiced the kinds of creative, improvisational work that adaptive leadership demands. Thank you once again to Cross Roads Camp and Retreat Center for providing a holy space in which to laugh, learn, and enjoy fellowship.

It is a blessing to work with the Candidacy Committee of the New Jersey Synod. Please continue to pray for us as we do this work on behalf of the church.

Respectfully submitted,

Christa Compton, Chairperson
N.J. Synod Candidacy Committee

NEW JERSEY SYNOD CANDIDATES FOR ROSTERED LEADERSHIP – 2019

Entranced (Word and Sacrament)

Haydee Colon Hernandez
United Lutheran Seminary at Philadelphia
Saint Matthew's, Union City

Dale Newton
New Brunswick Theological Seminary, New Brunswick
United Lutheran Seminary, Philadelphia, PA
Saint Stevens, South Plainfield

Entranced (Word and Service)

Endorsed (Word and Service)

Mackenzie Alexander
United Lutheran Seminary at Philadelphia and Temple University
Saint Paul's, Hainesport

Endorsed (Word and Sacrament)

JJ Keelan
United Lutheran Seminary at Philadelphia
Holy Trinity, Manasquan

Erich Kussman
Princeton Theological Seminary
Holy Cross, Springfield, NJ

Currently on Internship (Word and Sacrament)

Abbey Ferjak
Yale Divinity
Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, Berkeley, CA.
Christ Lutheran, Woodcliff, Lake
Internship site: Advent Lutheran Church NY. NY

Miles Hopgood
Princeton Theological Seminary/United Lutheran Seminary at Philadelphia
Abiding Presence, Ewing
Internship site: Lutheran Church of God's Love Newton, PA

Bridget Gautieri
United Lutheran Seminary at Philadelphia

Calvary, Lutheran Cranford

Internship Site: Saint John's Lutheran Church, Parkville, MD

Kathleen Kerin

Drew Theological Seminary & United Lutheran Seminary at Philadelphia
Messiah, Oakland

Internship Site: Saint Paul's Lutheran Church, Glenside, Pennsylvania

APPROVED FOR ORDINATION (Word and Sacrament)

Serena Rice

Princeton Theological Seminary and United Lutheran Seminary at Philadelphia
Living Waters, Flemington

Internship Site: Abiding Peace, Budd Lake, New Jersey

Peter Edwardsen

United Lutheran Seminary at Philadelphia
Lord of Life, Tabernacle

Internship Site: Apostles' Lutheran Church Turnersville, New Jersey

NO LONGER IN PROCESS

Jennifer DeValue

United Lutheran Seminary at Gettysburg
Grace, River Edge

Kevin Ellis

United Lutheran Seminary at Philadelphia
Prince of Peace, Princeton Junction

THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION FOR EMERGING MINISTRIES (TEEM)

None at this time.

APPROVED FOR CONSECRATION AS A DEACON

None at this time.

PASTORS ORDAINED IN ANOTHER LUTHERAN/CHRISTIAN CHURCH BODY

None at this time.

REINSTATEMENT TO THE ROLLS

None at this time.

CALLED TO LEAD
2019 Report to Synod Assemblies
Paul Baglyos, ELCA Candidacy and Leadership Manager for Regions 7 & 8

Called to Lead is the title of a new discernment guide regarding ministry in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Baptism includes a call from God to share the ministry of Jesus Christ in the world, and some baptized people discern a call from God to the particular ministries of pastors and deacons in the church. *Called to Lead* is intended to help people figure out whether God is calling them to become pastors or deacons.

Trying to figure that out involves paying attention to the suggestions, encouragements and nudges we might receive from the people around us. Has anyone ever suggested that you might become a pastor or a deacon? Has anyone ever encouraged you to consider that possibility? Has anyone ever nudged you to take some steps in that direction? Perhaps the suggestions, encouragements and nudges have occurred as internal stirrings, leading you to wonder about becoming a pastor or deacon or to imagine yourself serving in those particular ministry roles. In any case, *Called to Lead* can help you to decide whether and how to act upon those suggestions, encouragements and nudges.

Called to Lead can also help you to give other people the suggestions, encouragements and nudges they might need to figure out whether God is calling them to become pastors or deacons. Do you know anyone you believe would serve well as a pastor or a deacon? Do you know anyone you perceive to be well suited to those particular ministry roles? If so, *Called to Lead* is a resource you can recommend to that person.

Called to Lead is available on the ELCA website as a downloadable resource. Click “Resources” on the ELCA homepage, then click “Candidacy” on the menu of photo icons. A Spanish translation of *Called to Lead* will soon be available as well.

I am pleased to recommend *Called to Lead* to your use in discernment, as I am pleased also to work with your synod’s candidacy leaders and candidacy committees in our churchwide work of guiding the people God has called to become pastors and deacons in the ELCA.

REPORT OF THE NJ SYNOD COACHING TEAM

2019 NJ Synod Assembly

The NJ Synod Coaching Team was formed in June of 2017 to facilitate change, growth, and overall church renewal of the New Jersey Synod through the coaching model as we carry out God's mission in a changing world.

We set out to accompany a community of empowered clergy and lay leaders who are better able to discern their God-given gifts, become more resilient, and achieve more effective and meaningful ministry through intentional coaching partnerships. To sustain this goal, we are actively recruiting and developing a wide and deep network of faithful and effective coaches in New Jersey.

In 2018, we met achievable objectives in three areas: communication, client recruitment, and coach development.

- First, we increased our online presence on the NJ Synod website by creating a separate dropdown line for coaching. Each coach also created a brief introductory video about why they coach.
- Second, our primary recruitment and expansion of coaching in the NJ Synod came about through the existing ministries of EMU, E4V, and CMC. In each ministry program, a coach is assigned to a congregation to accompany them as they implement their learnings from the training to their congregation. We also matched several rostered and non-rostered people with coaches from our synod assembly table. As of January 2019, we are coaching X rostered leaders, X non-rostered leaders, and X congregational teams.
- Third, to increase our coaching capacity in the NJ synod, we hosted a coach training event through CoachNet with eight participants in October. Jacqueline Belzer, Chris Bruesehoff, Marilyn Burgin, Arundel Clark, Jill Collicot, Don Egan, Jay Unzaga, and Norbert Hahn (of the SEPA Synod). In addition, Kathleen Jacinto completed the Spanish-speaking coach training this year. In partnership with CoachNet, we continue to support our coaches with continuing education opportunities (trainings and online seminars), and through mutual support and mentorship.

We give thanks to God for creating opportunities to walk alongside his servants, asking bold questions, and listening deeply to create space for personal insight and change in our changing world.

If you are in the midst of change or transition in your ministry or personal life, if your congregation is stuck, or if you're curious about coaching, please contact us.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jenny McLellan, Interim Coaching Coordinator jmclellan@calvaryluth.org

Janet Blair, Giselle Coutinho, Maristela Freiberg, Jim Krombholz, Ruth Roemer, and Mark Summer
NJ Synod Coach Leadership Team

REPORT OF THE COMMUNICATION & MISSION INTERPRETATION TEAM 2019 NJ Synod Assembly

Sharing the Synod's story, one post at a time

The good news of Jesus Christ is a story designed to be shared. Your experience of Jesus might be exactly what your neighbor needs to hear. The NJ Synod is committed to help you be the body of Christ in the world by sharing Jesus with everyone in your neighborhood.

Jersey Jottings is the weekly newsletter prepared by the Synod Office. Get the latest news from the synod and discover how congregations all over the New Jersey are making a difference. As of March 25, 1296 people receive this message every week. Can you help push us over 1500 by the end of the 2019 Synod Assembly? It's easy to join: Text JOTTINGS to 22828 to get started or visit <https://www.njsynod.org/stay-connected>

Are you using Social Media? Don't leave the synod assembly without following the New Jersey Synod. You can find us on:

- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/NJSynodELCA>
- Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/njsynod/>
- Twitter: <https://twitter.com/njsynod>

4 times a year, we prepare an insert in *The Living Lutheran*. These 4 pages are used to dig deeper into what the synod and our congregations are doing. Over the last year, we've highlighted the ways communities have come together to organize food pantries, prepare for VBS, join new cohorts working on their congregational vitality, and the ways communities are learning to become more open and affirming. Rev. Marc A. Stutzel and Rev. Lisa Holliday are the primary editors. They're always looking for more stories to share. Send a note to Rev. Marc A. Stutzel at pastormarc@clc4u.com to have your community and ministry showcased.

Looking to enhance how your congregation's communication?

Below is a list of things you can do right now to help share your story with your neighborhood:

- 1) Pick up a copy of *The Social Media Gospel: Sharing the Good News in New Ways* 2nd Edition by Meredith Gould to develop your own communication plans.
- 2) To send out a weekly or monthly email, check out MailChimp at <https://mailchimp.com/>
- 3) Looking to create graphics for social media? Think about using Canva (<https://www.canva.com>) or the app Bible Lens.
- 4) Make sure to reach out to your local community newspapers. Regularly send them photos and press releases about what's happening at your church. Try to send them information about upcoming events 3 weeks in advance.
- 5) Use the sign on your building and regularly update your message. Instead of being sentimental in your message, think about how you can form the faith of the person spending 3 seconds driving past your building.

- 6) Create a robust permission form especially if children will be in your photos. Ask for permission and let parents choose to say no.
- 7) Invite people to regularly check-in on social media while at your church. Encourage people to use their phones during worship, especially if they're posting reflections about the sermon, music, and more. If their phone rings during worship, invite them to pick it up and tell the other person on the line: "I'm at my church - and you should be here too!"

Need some inspiration? Check out what these communities and people are doing:

- Instagram: Zion in Oldwick <https://www.instagram.com/zionoldwicknj>
- Facebook: Living Waters Lutheran Church - <https://www.facebook.com/adminterry/> and Good Shepherd in Glen Rock <https://www.facebook.com/Good-Shepherd-Lutheran-Church-100873869956835>
- Church Signs: Advent Lutheran in Wyckoff <https://www.facebook.com/adventwyckoff/>
- Church website: St. Mark, Hamilton <http://stmarkhamilton.org/>
- As a pastor, using social media to connect: Pastor Jenny McLellan has used images with bible verses to create online community.

Know a community that's sharing Jesus in awesome ways? Let us know! Contact Dawn Roberts at the NJ Synod office (droberts@njsynod.org) or Rev. Marc A. Stutzel (pastormarc@clc4u.com).

REPORT OF COMPENSATION AID TASK FORCE

2019 NJ Synod Assembly

Since its establishment at the 1994 Synod Assembly, the Compensation Aid Task Force has received \$1,353,253.47 from legacy gifts, congregations, and individuals of the NJ Synod. In addition, there was \$3,543.75 of net investment income. In 2018, a total of \$7,410.04 was received from 11 congregations and one pastor. The ending balance for 2018 was \$413,154.52.

In the same period, \$24,666 in grant money was given to three congregations. In addition, \$5,000 was directed to pastoral staff bonuses, and \$11,900 was forwarded to the Bishop's Discretionary Fund for Christmas gifts to urban pastors, retired pastors, and pensioners.

Since the NJ Synod changed its year-end to January 31, the 2018 figures represent a 13-month period - - from January 1, 2018 – January 31, 2019. Beginning in 2018, investment income and expenses from the Synod's investments are now allocated to the Compensation Aid Fund. Prior to this year, the investment income and expenses were not allotted to this fund.

This fund was established to supplement the compensation of pastors receiving a salary of 20% or more below Synod guidelines and assist retired pastors whose pension income is inadequate. Over the years, it has also been used to help first-call pastors reduce student loan debt and in the ways noted above.

Along with processing applications for grants and consulting with congregations that apply, the Task Force encourages congregations to contribute to the Compensation Aid Fund an amount equal to 1% of their pastor's "Defined Compensation" as determined by the ELCA's pension and health plan. Eligible congregations and pastors are invited to contact any member of the Task Force for more information. They are Pastor James Egan, Pastor John Johnson, and Pastor John Holliday. Thanks to Lois Parrett, Synod bookkeeper, for assisting the Task Force by recording receipts and disbursements.

Thanks to the congregations of the Synod and individuals who have contributed over the years and to congregations that have directed a legacy gift to the fund. Your generous sharing has made it possible to lessen the financial stress of those in the ordained ministry.

Respectfully Submitted,
The Rev. James R. Egan
Chairperson

REPORT OF THE CONSTITUTION REVIEW TEAM

2019 NJ Synod Assembly

Greetings from the Constitution Review Team,

The Constitution Review team has the responsibility to review the synod and congregational constitutions to be sure that the documents are up to date with the churchwide constitutions. The Constitution Review team also ensures that any changes and updates made to these constitutions adhere to the ELCA Constitution for Synods and the ELCA Model Constitution for Congregations as adopted by the ELCA Churchwide Assemblies. Please note that when amendments are proposed, , except for mandatory updates resulting from ELCA Churchwide Assembly actions, the team will make recommendations concerning wording, applicability, and concurrence with constitutional requirements of the ELCA, the synod, and a congregations' own constitution. Our constitutions are tools which, when used well, enhance our mission in serving our Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ.

The Constitution Review team is here to help you comply with ELCA requirements. **If the congregation uses the ELCA Model Constitution for Congregations in its entirety without changes the Constitution Committee review is only required to verify the information. Approval is not required.** Similarly, if the Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions are in compliance with the congregational constitution the Constitution Committee review is primarily for verification and not for approval. The [ELCA website](#) provides documents and links to help church councils as they update and modify their congregation's constitution so that the document is in compliance. with the most recently adopted "Model Constitution for Congregations". Please be aware that a Churchwide meeting is scheduled for 2019.

The Constitution Review team reviews the resolutions of NJ Synod and Churchwide assemblies to be sure the current constitutions of the synod and congregations reflect those resolutions, which still apply. As such, congregations are reminded that when they are considering making changes in their constitutions, outside of mandatory updates resulting from NJ Synod and Churchwide actions, these changes are to be reviewed by the constitution review team and approved by the synod council.

The review team had the pleasure of reviewing constitutions for over 20% of our congregations and we look forward to continuing this process for all congregations. As a help in this process we would like to discuss the process procedures as noted in the "Model Constitution for Congregations":

- ❖ The congregation council reviews the current constitution for compliance. **We suggest during the annual meeting you get approval for the review and update of your current constitution to be in line with ELCA requirements. This informs the congregation of the need to bring your governance documents up to date and allows you to organize a team to work on the documents.**
- ❖ The congregation governance documents are updated for compliance. **We suggest organizing a team to review and update the constitution, bylaws and continuing resolution documents. Once the documents are complete the team presents the new documents to the congregational council.**

***C16.01.** Unless provision *C16.04. is applicable, those sections of this constitution that are not required, in accord with the Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, ... The Congregation Council shall notify the congregation's members of the proposal together with the council's recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the meeting. Notification may take place by mail or electronic means, as permitted by state law.

- ❖ The congregation council updates the constitution. **If the changes, amendments or updates to the constitution are not in line with the Model constitution, the council will inform the congregation of the changes 30 days prior to the meeting.**

***C16.02.** An amendment to this constitution, proposed under *C16.01., shall:

- be approved at a legally called Congregation Meeting according to this constitution by a majority vote of those voting members present and voting;
 - be ratified without change at the next annual meeting by a two-thirds vote of those voting members present and voting; and
 - have the effective date included in the resolution² and noted in the constitution.
- ❖ The congregation council updates the constitution. **Changes, amendments or updates to the constitution that are not in line with the Model constitution require approval at the current annual meeting and ratification without change at the next annual meeting.**

***C16.03.** Any amendments to this constitution that result from the processes provided in *C16.01. and *C16.02. shall be sent by the secretary of this congregation to the synod. The synod shall notify the congregation of its decision to approve or disapprove the proposed changes; the changes shall go into effect upon notification that the synod has approved them.

- ❖ The congregation makes a decision about their constitution. **Changes, amendments or updates to the constitution not in line with the Model constitution, require review and approval by the Synod.**

***C16.04.** This constitution may be amended to bring any section into conformity with a section or sections, either required or not required, of the Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as most recently amended by the Churchwide Assembly. Such amendments may be approved by a majority vote of those voting members present and voting at any legally called meeting of the congregation without presentation at a prior meeting of the congregation... Following the adoption of an amendment, the secretary of the congregation shall submit a copy thereof to the synod. Such provisions shall become effective immediately following a vote of approval.

- ❖ The congregation makes a decision about their constitution. **If the changes, amendments or updates to the constitution are in line with the Model constitution including all required provisions the council will inform the congregation of the changes 30 days prior to the meeting. The changes are adopted and approved at the current meeting with a majority vote.**

² Such an effective date must be stated in relation to the requirements of *C16.03. to allow time for synodical review of the amendment.

- ❖ The congregation makes a decision about their constitution. **If the changes, amendments or updates to the constitution are in line with the Model constitution including all required provisions then approval of the Synod is not required.** The Committee reviews the Constitution for verification to ensure that this is met.

***C17.01.** This congregation may adopt bylaws. No bylaw may conflict with this constitution.

***C17.04.** Approved changes to the bylaws shall be sent by the secretary of this congregation to the synod.

- ❖ The congregation makes a decision about their Bylaws. **The Committee will review the Bylaws to verify compliance with *C17.01.**

***C18.01.** The congregation in a legally called meeting or the Congregation Council may enact continuing resolutions. Such continuing resolutions may not conflict with the constitution or bylaws of this congregation.

- ❖ The congregation makes a decision about their Continuing Resolutions. **The Committee will review the Continuing Resolutions to verify compliance with *C18.01.**

As noted if the congregational constitution follows the “Model Constitution for Congregations” the Constitution Committee review is primarily for verification and not for approval. Similarly, if the Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions are in compliance with the congregational constitution the Constitution Committee review is primarily for verification and not for approval.

The New Jersey Synod Constitution Review team is here to help you through this process. Please send an email to Cassandra Mack, synod secretary, with any questions.

Together in Christ,

Cassandra Mack
Secretary, New Jersey Synod, ELCA
cmack@njsynod.org

ECUMENICAL AND INTER-RELIGIOUS RELATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT 2019 NJ Synod Assembly

Greetings in the name of our Lord who calls us all to be one as God is one. In the past year the Committee met occasionally to discuss how to continue providing resources and insights to New Jersey Synod regarding the most recent developments in the ELCA's ecumenical relationships working documents. The committee includes one member from each of the six Mission Districts of the synod to serve as a liaison to those districts in providing ecumenical resources and encouragement toward ecumenical ministry has proven to be helpful. Those members are currently:

Northern: John Holiday

Gateway: Carmine Pernini

Western: Bob Kriesat

Middle: Chris Halverson

Shore: Frank Watson

Delaware: Vacant (served by Ingrid Wengert until accepting a call outside the District).

In 2018 the committee provided congregations with continued access to the latest resources that have come out in the last few years and encouragement to use them for study and discussion within their congregation and/or other congregations in their community. The most recent was made available at the 2018 Synod Assembly, *A Declaration of Our Inter-Religious Commitment: a draft policy statement of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* wherein congregations were invited to read through the declaration and discover how congregations might engage in ecumenical ministry with those outside the Christian faith. The final draft will be reviewed and voted on at this year's Churchwide Assembly.

During the year I have attended various ecumenical meetings and gatherings within our synod including attendance at the Episcopal Diocese of Newark Convention as our synod's Ecumenical Representative. I will also be attending the National Workshop on Christian Unity held in St. Louis this April 1-4 with the theme, *"Beloved Community: A Call to Holiness and Justice."* At the conclusion of the Workshop my second term serving on the Board of the Lutheran Ecumenical and Interfaith Representative Network will also be ending. While I have appreciated the opportunity to serve Bishops Riley and Bartholomew as the New Jersey Synod's Ecumenical Representative since 2012 I have chosen to resign this role following the Workshop as well so that I may focus on other ministry responsibilities within the Delaware Mission District and Southwestern Mission Cluster. It has been an honor to serve for the last seven years and I hope to stay involved with our synod's ecumenical ministry as availability allows.

The Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations Committee looks forward to renewing our role within the synod as a resource to congregations in the work of ecumenism and ministry with our neighbors. The committee looks forward to hearing of what ministry programs and actions the congregations of our synod are participating in toward greater Christian unity as well as inter-religious cooperation.

Respectfully submitted,

The Rev. Wayne Zschech, D. Min., Ecumenical Representative

EMU/NJ

“Excellence in Ministry, Unleashed”

Rev. Scott Schantzenbach, Director
Rev. Fred Becker, Coordinator



EMU/NJ, *Excellence in Ministry, Unleashed*, is the name of our work, supported by a generous grant from the Lilly Endowment. The work of our EMU team impacts on pastors, congregations and synodical systems to cultivate a Christ-centered culture where we live, love, and lead generously for the sake of the world. We are targeting stress inducing issues related to financial literacy, as well as seeking sustainability of calling congregations, readiness for retirement, medical costs, and educational indebtedness among our pastors.

2018 was the third year of this three-year initiative in which we addressed the following areas:

- A. Financial Literacy and Stewardship Competency programs bringing change to financial and stewardship behaviors of pastors through education and empowerment. A series of Retreats and Infusion events target varied cohorts for intentional education while incentivizing access to financial, legal and accounting services. 54 Pastors participated on our Lunch, Listen, and Learn events in 2018 with the addition to 14 participants in a recent vocational retreat.
- B. EMU Labs created a venue of experimentation and exploration cultivating ideas and changed behaviors critical to the interface between the pastor, congregation, and world. 13 congregations trained team at one of our Cultivating Congregational Cultures of Generosity (CCCG) events. Support for the Executive Certificate in Religious Fundraising and Stewardship Coaches were added to our support efforts in 2018.
- C. Ministerial Excellence Fund. Working with our Synod Council, the EMU Team edited our Clergy Compensation Guidelines to reset expectations and incentivize changes. In the three years of this initiative, our Ministerial Excellence Fund awarded \$328,158 in non-competitive grants to bring relief to the crushing impact of educational debt among our rostered leaders. In addition, \$14,900 was awarded in incentives to grow retirement contributions and support Flexible Spending Accounts for day-care and medical costs.
- D. Research, Networks and Resources. Investing in continuing research allows us to direct our adaptation of content, incentives, and sustaining networks in the New Jersey Synod. EMU/NJ explores means to influence congregational and synodical systems, supporting changed financial behaviors, skills, and attitudes

We are pleased to announce that the Lilly Endowment is favorably inclined to continue our work and has awarded a “Phase II” grant that will continue our EMU project through 2021.

Live, Love, Lead Generously

REPORT OF FISCAL MANAGEMENT, ADMINISTRATION, AND PROPERTY COMMITTEE

Since the congregations, synods, and churchwide organization are interdependent units that share responsibly in God's mission, all share in the responsibility to develop, implement, and strengthen the financial support program of the whole church. The gifts and offerings of the members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America are given to support all parts of this church and thus partnership in this church should be evidenced in determining each part's share of the gifts and offerings. -NJ Synod of the ELCA Constitution, S15.11

The Fiscal, Management, Administration & Property [FMAP] committee serves this church, synod and its member congregations seeking to fulfill the section cited above taken from the New Jersey Synod's constitution. All of the core values of the NJ Synod have bearing on the work of this committee. At the same time, this committee seeks to be especially mindful and appreciative of the values of interdependence and generosity. This is, of course, done in a variety of ways and not just by this committee. Further, actions of this committee are subject to Synod Council approval. However, this committee does play an important role in providing support to the function of synodical oversight of the God-given resources we share while endeavoring to promote and practice generous living inspired by God's revelation of God's abundant ways and abundant love for God's world. May we, with the psalmist be so blessed as to say, live and believe '*...[our] cup runneth over...(Psalm 23:5c).*'

The actions undertaken by this committee and approved by Synod Council are detailed in the consolidated minutes of the NJ Synod council meetings found here in the bulletin of reports.

The work of the FMAP committee for this year includes meetings held on January 16, March 22, May 15, July 17 & September 18 of 2018 and January 22 & March 28 of 2019 with additional meetings to be scheduled in the months ahead.

In the course of the year the committee reviews reports on congregational giving and giving trends as well as balance sheets, fund balance reports and spending plans of the NJ Synod. The committee through the assignment of synod property managers assists identified churches or ministries with maintenance and proper upkeep either to carry out its ministry, or, because a property is being prepared for sale. There are also compassionate yet responsible mortgage arrangements the committee oversees. This committee also receives and reviews reports regarding the NJ Synod's accounting procedures, annual audit and investment committee. The Rev. Scott Schantzenbach has also shared and informed this committee about the NJ Synod's 'Excellence in Ministry Unleashed (EMU)' initiative shedding important light though Lilly Foundation funded evidence based research about the interrelationship between financial literacy, best practices for congregational economics and the viability and vitality of congregational ministry. This committee also participated in the deliberations and arrangements made to remove the Cross Roads Camp and Retreat Center dam and the steps that are currently being taken to allow the lake to return to its natural ecological stasis.

Many thanks to the members of the committee: Rev. Susan Jones, Skip Cox, Rev. Peter Beeson (now relocated), Gerry Lauro, and John Kollie. Many thanks to the synod staff who support the work of the committee: Rev. Scott Schantzenbach, Lois Parrett, Bob Poole and Matt McDevitt. Thanks to Tom Kull for serving as our real estate manager. Many, many thanks to the synod's exceptionally dedicated treasurer, James Harris, and to the NJ Synod's bishop, Rev. Tracie Bartholomew.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Dean R. Brown, chair

REPORT OF THE NEW JERSEY SYNOD FUND FOR MISSION

2019 NJ Synod Assembly

The New Jersey Synod Fund for Mission is an endowment fund providing resources for mission-related projects of the New Jersey Synod that might otherwise go unmet. Begun with proceeds from the sale of former LCA church properties, it continues gratefully to receive and faithfully to invest funds granted to it from bequests to the Synod. Grants are made, ranging from 3% to 6% of the corpus annually. The Fund's Management Committee receives and evaluates proposals from Synod program units, mission clusters, congregations, officers and Synod Council and makes recommendations to the Synod Council for funding. Special categories in the fund are reserved for Music Grants in support of the development of church musicians and for Handicap Accessibility.

The Fund for Mission Management Committee consists of seven persons (three pastors, of whom the Bishop is one, and four lay persons. The Treasurer serves as ex officio consultant. These criteria guide us: (proposals need not meet every criterion):

1. The proposed program shall be one that could not normally be funded by the operating budget of the Synod or ELCA Churchwide Ministries, or by the agency for whom the grant is sought. (Frequently the committee is able to respond to the need represented in grant proposals that are submitted by finding other appropriate funding sources.)

2. Preference is given for:

- initiating new mission ventures: providing seed money and/or leveraging other funds for mission.
- projects having a direct relationship to the urban character of the Synod.
- projects that are inclusive with regard to color, language, ages, and sex of persons.
- projects that address the needs of the disadvantaged, especially the poor, mentally and physically challenged, and the powerless.
- projects that enable the Synod to develop new ministries to meet needs occasioned by societal change.

Grants approved for 2018/2019 projects totaled \$85,800 and were in support of applications for Synod Council Mission Initiatives, the Bishop's Mission Subvention Fund, Music Programs, Advocacy and Social Justice, Lutheran Episcopal Advocacy Ministry NJ, Evangelism and Outreach, Renovation, Hunger/Feeding Ministries and Youth and Family Ministry. No grant proposals were received for improving accessibility.

Management Committee members can give counsel to those interested in preparing a grant application. The submission deadline is September 1st. Payment is made following Synod Council approval. Grant recipients are requested to evaluate their respective projects for report to the Fund for Mission Management Committee by June 1 of the year following receipt of the funds. We used this information to provide mission news about what these grants were accomplishing in *Jersey Jottings*.

Thanks to all the members of the Management Committee for their wise guidance in the stewardship of this Fund. We are indebted to Bishop Tracie Bartholomew for her

leadership, Treasurer James Harris for his invaluable work and report of it, and to LuAnn Barnes, Administrative Assistant and Confidential Secretary to the Bishop for her excellent assistance in preparing our minutes and correspondence!

Respectfully Submitted,
The Rev. Dr. Patricia S. Medley, CHAIR

The Rev. Gunnar L. Anderson (Living Waters, Ringoes)
Haydee Colon-Hernandez (St. Matthew, Union City)
Eric Kim (Holy Trinity, Red Bank)
The Rev. Patricia S. Medley (St. Paul, East Windsor), LEADER
Joan L. New (Prince of Peace, Princeton Junction)
LuAnn Barnes and Lois Parrett, Staff
The Rev. Tracie L. Bartholomew, Bishop
James Harris, Treasurer, Ex-Officio
The Rev. Maristela L. Freiberg, ELCA Director of Evangelical Mission, Advisor